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## EUROZONE VAMPIRES: THE GRAY CLUB OF DEATH

ECONOFICTION, GOSSE, NECROPOLITICS BARBARISM, DEATH, NEOLIBERALISM

Looking at the picture of IMF head Christine Lagarde and German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble one gets the feeling of old partners in crime, a perfectly legal crime syndicate approved by the Eurozone and given the elite status of a total liquidation squad. In Max Brooks novel *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War* one of the characters speaks of an Economist pop-cultural icon:

Our client liked to know people who were known by all. His plan was to provide safety for those who could raise his image during and after the war, playing Moses to the scared and famous. And you know what, they fell for it. The actors, and singers, and rappers and pro athletes, and just the professional faces, like the ones you see on talk shows or reality shows, or even that little rich, spoiled, tired-looking whore who was famous for just being a rich, spoiled, tired-looking whore.<sup>1</sup>

Well Schäuble is no Moses, and Lagarde may or may not be a Vampire of capitalism or a "rich, spoiled, tired-looking whore who is famous for just being a rich" financier, but one thing for sure is that they are both in collusion with bleeding Greece for everything they can get. Some on the left think that imagining a serious change of the political coordinates in which we live is almost entirely impossible; a small, radical change in the economic conditions and regulations around the globe. It is not only Žižek who 'has no alternative', it is not even only the Left that hasn't – it is basically all of us who are paralysed by the headlights of global capitalism.<sup>2</sup>

As Simon Critchely surmises in *Infinitely Demanding* (2007): 'Resistance is Surrender'. If you are 'obsessed' with demonstrating your dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs, you might very well be secretly wishing for them to basically remain as they are. In this precise sense, it is better not to do anything, to stay at home and read philosophy, than to display resistance against the state in the streets with banners and slogans. His is a philosophy of complicity, a staid bargaining of the dead who have already allowed themselves to become bleeders for capital vampirism.

As Saskia Sassen tells us austerity has become another mode of enabling sovereign governmentality and institutions like IMF to acquire vast stretches of land-debt in a foreign sovereign nation-state as a sort of extension of its own territory even as it expels local villages and rural economies from that right to life. Another is the brilliant engineering that allows us to extract safely what we want from deep inside our societies while disfiguring its surface of those social safety systems en passant. Our advanced political economies have created a world where complexity too often tends to produce elementary brutalities masked as salvation and redemption. This brutalization comes about through a logics organization whose main policy of "innovation" in intergovernmental agreements to protect the nations through debt relief, which means, practically and brutally speaking, that countries will tend to fight for expanding their right to enforce debt on their citizenry so as to buy time against the future. In the case of finance, its organizing logic has evolved into a relentless push for hyperprofits and a need to develop instruments that enable it to expand the range of what can be financialized into every sector of society. As she admits:

Historically, the oppressed have often risen against their masters. But today the oppressed have mostly been expelled and survive at a great distance from their oppressors. Further, the "oppressor" is increasingly a complex system that combines persons, networks, and machines with no obvious center. And yet there are sites where it all comes together, where power becomes concrete and can be engaged, and where the oppressed are part of the social infrastructure for power. (Sassen KL 185)<sup>3</sup>

One such site is happening in EU financial meeting grounds... In the latest BBC article Eurogroup chief Jeroen Dijsselbloem warns of a tough meeting ahead, saying there is a "major issue of trust" over Greece's ability to implement reforms. Trust? Who the hell is worrying about "trust": people are about to die soon, no money to buy food, clothing, rent, etc., and these suckers are worried about "trust"? Sounds like this meeting is nothing more than another blanket session of fear mongering to me. As Zygmunt reminds us members of the global elite of super-rich need not concern themselves with assuaging the fears that haunt the natives/ locals of the place where they stopped for a while, because keeping 'the proles happy' is no longer a condition of

their own security, or indeed of their wealth and continuing aggrandisement. If the volume of local fears grows too large for comfort they can just turn the screw a little tighter on financial insecurity letting the natives stew and burn alone in the cauldrons of panic and nightmares ...

For the global elite, whipping up rather than mitigating the fears of locals spells few if any risks. Refashioning and refocusing the fears born of global social insecurity into local safety concerns seem indeed to be a most effective and almost foolproof strategy; it brings so many gains and relatively few risks, when it is consistently pursued. By far its most important benefit, though, consists in diverting the eyes of the frightened from the causes of their existential anxiety, so that the global overclass may 'continue rewarding itself financially on a staggering scale', undisturbed.<sup>4</sup>

The EU officials told Reuters that "Under certain conditions, they jointly see the proposals as a basis for negotiation." (ibid.) We can expect those conditions to be either more of the same austerity, or even more stringent control mechanisms that will entail even harsher conditions upon the multitude of Greek citizens who are already at the breaking point.

What I keep wondering is *Where is the Solidarity against the EU itself?* Where are the radicals? Is there anything going on to support Greece in other countries? Are all these intellectual pipe-dreamers of the Left sitting back just watching – a wait and see period? It's as if everyone is in love with the "spectacle of fear" rather than its reality on the street. One is reminded of the moment of coming upon a serpent in the wilds: a moment when one hears the rattling vibration of a snake, one freezes, one stops in one's tracks, fearful of moving, yet scanning the landscape for the visible signs of this ever-present terror. As if one were caught in a suspended time, a time of no time: a pure present without outlet, cut off from hope, bound to an instant of pure fear that is born of an animal instinct for flight and escape that is no longer possible. What Guy Debord said a generation ago is still true today "the current form of alienation is imposed on the producers of an estranged present. In this spatial alienation, the society that radically separates the subject from the activity it steals from him is in reality separating him from his own time. This potentially surmountable social alienation is what has prevented and paralyzed the possibilities and risks of a living alienation within time."<sup>5</sup> Are people stuck in time? Have they through fear suddenly become frozen in an eternal present, paralyzed to move, to act, to risk doing or saying anything? As Debord says:

"Static societies" are societies that have reduced their historical movement to a minimum and that have managed to maintain their internal conflicts and their conflicts with the natural and human environment in a constant equilibrium. Although the extraordinary diversity of the institutions established for this purpose bears eloquent testimony to the flexibility of human nature's self-creation, this diversity is apparent only to the external observer, the anthropologist who looks back from the vantage point of historical time. *In each of these societies a definitive organizational structure has eliminated any possibility of change. The total conformism of their social practices, with which all human possibilities are identified for all time, has no external limit but the fear of falling back into a formless animal condition. The members of these societies remain human at the price of always remaining the same.*(ibid.)

Is this what it's about? Is this after all the much vaunted "human condition," the condition of total sterility and passivity for the price of security? Have we suddenly fallen into a social world of pure apathy where fear and terror rule our lives to the point where movement and change seem no longer possible; not because they don't exist, but because we have been corralled into a global commons that is both our prison and our asylum? The elimination of hope, change, and the future: a world of conformity and passivity, of securitization against the animal condition itself? A world where "freedom" itself, risk, has been completely removed and bound to a system of financial practices and dictatorship where risk of failure is not an option? In a world where economic servitude becomes normalized is freedom = austerity the final solution – a solution that is no longer of the fascist anti-Semitic kind of racialism, but of a totalized space of economic holocaust? Is this the freedom offered dangling from the new EU ministers of fear? A freedom of total economic enslavement?

As one business man from Greece in the BBC article says: "Something must be done. The measures the government is offering are bad, but it's the only way to go forward." Is this true? People are suspended in time, in a twilight zone between two iron fists: the fist of total power of finance and the government who has their backs to the sea. Either way is a no go for Greece as a Nation. What we see coming is nothing but more tyranny of the market, the implementation of even tighter controls and fear over the people themselves. Is this how the world runs now? Have we truly begun to live in a total world of insecurity and fear: absolute control = absolute securitization of the populace through financial control?

What used to be said of War is now the state of Economics: economics as a "state of exception" has become normalized. Moreover, society as a whole becomes increasingly financialized; political concessions to public interest groups become relics of long abandoned claims to democracy; and the welfare state is hollowed out to serve the interests of global markets and elite banking and governmental institutions. Any collective sense of ethical imagination and social responsibility toward those who are vulnerable or in need of care is now viewed as a scourge or pathology. Within this mindset, interventions that might benefit the disadvantaged are perversely deemed to be irresponsible acts that prevent individuals from learning to deal with their own suffering— even though, as we know, the forces that condition their plight remain beyond their control, let alone their ability to influence them to any degree.<sup>6</sup>

Discarded by the corporate state, dispossessed of social provisions, and deprived of the economic, political, and social conditions that enable viable and critical modes of agency, more and more sectors of civilian society find themselves inhabiting

what many term “zones of total social exclusion” marked by deep inequalities in power, wealth, and income. Such zones are sites of rapid disinvestment, places marked by endless spectacles of violence that materialize the neoliberal logics of containment, commodification, surveillance, militarization, cruelty, criminalization, and punishment. These “zones of hardship” constitute a hallmark and intensification of the neoliberal politics of disposability, which is relentless in the material and symbolic violence it wages against society for the benefit of a financial minority. What has become clear is that capitalist expropriation, dispossession, and disinvestment have reached a point where life has become completely unbearable for many living in the most prosperous of nations. Areas of great affluence can often be found adjacent to, if not surrounded by, zones of great misery inhabited by impoverished immigrants, poor minorities, the homeless, young people living in debt, the long-term unemployed, workers, and the declining middle class, all of whom have been delivered by market forces into criminalized communities of violence, harassment, surveillance, and everyday humiliations and brutality. (Giroux KL 924)

In my last post Yanis Varoufakis implied that the leaders of this world want to force Greece into a “zone of hardship” and exclusion: “Based on months of negotiation, my conviction is that the German finance minister wants Greece to be pushed out of the single currency to put the fear of God into the French and have them accept his model of a disciplinarian Eurozone.” (here) Will the Greek citizens have to pay the price of total exclusion so that Germany can impose its new economic dictatorship upon the rest of the EU? Have we gone from political fascism to an economic and financial tyranny without even a whimper? So do you think people will wake up and do something to help Greece and her Citizens? Or will it all be a spectacle of the elites, the Vampires of a Financial Empire who will once again enforce blood letting upon a people with little left to give? A new Roman Circus where the only gladiators are the vicious financiers themselves who cut and bleed the Eurozone till its social body is flayed beyond recall?

### ECONOMIC PUPPETS OF CAPITAL

Sometimes I think the political puppets have left the stage, and allowed Economics full reign as the ultimate Stage Administrator of the World: “the puppet figures as the insensate and sub-personal reality hidden beneath the ‘mindless mirrors’ of our naive reality.”<sup>7</sup> Puppets function as ‘conduits to the unreal’, through whose agency hallucinatory phenomenism bleeds into a simultaneous concretisation of the oneiric theatre of cruelty. A staged production for brutality and cruelty based on a merciless rational madness that seeks profit over life. Life is played out as an inescapable puppet show, an endless dream in which the puppets are generally unaware that they are trapped within a mesmeric dance of whose mechanisms they know nothing, and over which they have no control. The puppet is not merely an mocking parody of man, it is the unmasking of the animate face of insensate reality, the unveiling of the inexorable mechanics of the personal. Isn’t this the perfect image of neoliberalism? A puppet machine that manufactures an oneiric dream played out on the stage of global capitalism: a realm within which we’ve all become puppets in a determinate mechanism of which we know little, and even more have no control? Is this not the insensate reality of global capitalism today?

Are we to fall before the great puppeteers of capital? Are we to allow the neo-vampires of the IMF like Legarde, and the finance ministers of fear like Schaeuble to pull the strings? Is this the new horror show? Thomas Ligotti the horror writer in a weird portrayal of this strangeness we’ve all succumbed to once said: “There will come a day for each of us—and then for all of us—when the future will be done with. Until then, humanity will acclimate itself to every new horror that comes knocking, as it has done from the very beginning. It will go on and on until it stops. And the horror will go on, as day follows day and generations fall into the future like so many bodies into open graves.”

Is this our fate as presented by our economic masters? To go on and on delivering to them every last ounce of surplus-value and surplus-jouissance left in the world till we all fall into open graves? Or, will we find another way? Begin again from the beginning and discover a way out of this trap? Break our puppet strings and walk away from our puppet masters? Will the glass eyes that have blinded us to our master’s reality fall away and reveal at last the real? Or shall we continue to bow before the big Other of Capital like puppets in a nightmare world of insanity that imprisons us and sucks us dry under the stone eyes of its vampiric gaze?

### NEOLIBERALISM AS ANHADONIA ECONOMICS

If we follow such leaders as these are we not accepting the truth of their anhadonia? Their emotions are of little or no account in the scheme of things for such as they; much rather do we not see in their withdrawn and glassy eyed manninism a mind emptied of all thought and being. Are not these economic leaders completely detached from anything, including themselves and anyone around them? This is the lesson of anhedonia, which is an eminently rational state. Is this not the truth of neoliberalism and austerity: that it is an android affair of anhedoniacs – creatures who have themselves already lost their humanity, become impersonal and detached mechanisms of hypercapitalism: codes in an overcoded world of algorithmic necessity? As William James once remarked: “One can distinguish many kinds of pathological depression. Sometimes it is mere passive joylessness and dreariness, discouragement, dejection, lack of taste and zest and spring.”<sup>8</sup> Mark Fisher would call this depressive realism, or the mark of the Capitalist Realist: “Depression is usually characterized as a state of anhedonia, but the condition I’m referring to is constituted not by an inability to get pleasure so much as it by an inability to do anything else except pursue pleasure. There is a sense that ‘something is missing’ – but no appreciation that this mysterious, missing enjoyment can only be accessed beyond the pleasure principle.”<sup>9</sup>

As Greece faces their masters will they be like Kafka's *The Trial*, caught between and 'ostensible acquittal' and an 'indefinite postponement'? As Fisher remarks:

Deleuze is right to argue that Kafka is the prophet of distributed, cybernetic power that is typical of Control societies. In *The Trial*, Kafka importantly distinguishes between two types of acquittal available to the accused. Definite acquittal is no longer possible, if it ever was. The two remaining options, then, are (1) 'Ostensible acquittal', in which the accused is to all and intents and purposes acquitted, but may later, at some unspecified time, face the charges in full, or (2) 'Indefinite postponement', in which the accused engages in (what they hope is an infinitely) protracted process of legal wrangling, so that the dreaded ultimate judgment is unlikely to be forthcoming. Deleuze observes that the Control societies delineated by Kafka himself, but also by Foucault and Burroughs, operate using indefinite postponement: Austerity as a lifelong process... debt that persists for as long as your working life continues... Work you take home with you... Working from home, homing from work. A consequence of this 'indefinite' mode of power is that external surveillance is succeeded by internal policing. Control only works if you are complicit with it. Hence the Burroughs figure of the 'Control Addict': the one who is addicted to control, but also, inevitably, the one who has been taken over, possessed by Control. (pp. 22-23)

Are Legarde and Schaeuble control addicts: addicted to control, as well as being controlled by controllers within? Are the police becoming the policed? The governors the governed? In seeking total control our economic governing body has only trapped themselves in their own dark chamber of horrors. Maybe the truth is that our supposed leaders themselves are the true puppets of capitalism, the ones who have become so immersed in their command and control systems that they themselves have become the actual determinate mechanisms and puppets of their own ill-founded systems. Maybe they are the ones imprisoned by their own lust for power and profit. Maybe we need to pull the plug, set them free, release them from the capitalist machine that produces such a crazy brutality, make them realize once and for all that we are discovering our own lines of flight and escape out of their puppet machine. Maybe that would be a true beginning...

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